

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 02153 021916Z
ACTION OPIC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8503

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT AU PRINCE 2153

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EINV SHUM HA
SUBJ: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON PROJECTS REGISTERED FOR
OPIC INSURANCE

REF: STATE 137188

1. THE EMBASSY IS SURPRISED THAT THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS DEFERRED A DECISION ABOUT PROPOSED OPIC INSURANCE FOR THREE AMERICAN INVESTMENTS IN HAITI FOR "REASONS PERTAINING TO WORK CONDITIONS." HAITI'S HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE HAS MARKEDLY IMPROVED IN RECENT YEARS AND SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS ARE NO LONGER A PROBLEM. THE HUMAN SUFFERING CAUSED BY HAITI'S PERVASIVE POVERTY IS A PROBLEM HOWEVER, AND ONE WHICH SERIOUSLY CONCERNS US IN THE BROADER HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT. IN ADDRESSING IT WE ARE SEEKING, INTER ALIA, TO STIMULATE A MUCH MORE RAPID RATE OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE LIGHT INDUSTRIAL SECTOR. THIS SECTOR IS THE ONLY PART OF HAITI'S ECONOMY WHICH IS GROWING, THE ONLY SECTOR PROVIDING NEW JOBS TO COUNTER HAITI'S ENDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT, AND IS THE ONLY SECTOR WITH THE POTENTIAL OF EVER EARNING ENOUGH FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO PAY FOR THE FOOD IMPORTS CURRENTLY NEEDED BY HAITI'S HUNGRY MILLIONS. ANY DELAY IN APPLICATIONS FOR OPIC INSURANCE OR FINANCING MIGHT DISCOURAGE POTENTIAL INVESTMENT NEEDED TO SUPPORT

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PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND COULD EXACERBATE THE SUFFERING OF THE JOBLESS.

2. EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE VISITED THE GTE, AUTOMATIC COIL, AND ALBERT CHAUVET FACTORIES MANY TIMES. THE AMBASSADOR HAS PERSONALLY VISITED VWO OF THE THREE FACTORIES. THE EXCELLENT WORKING CONDITIONS IN ALL THREE CLEAN, WELL-LIGHTED,

SPACIOUS FACTORIES WERE A FACTOR IN OUR RECOMMENDATIONS THAT INSURANCE BE ISSUED PROMPTLY. GTE'S RECORD AS AN EMPLOYER OF HAITIANS IS PARTICULARLY OUTSTANDING AND IT SETS AN EXAMPLE FOR THE NATION IN TERMS OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING, FRINGER BENEFITS, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. ITS WAGE LEVELS ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN HAITI, IT IS TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THE ONLY COMPANY THAT HAS HIRED A HAITIAN EXECUTIVE AT A US SALARY LEVEL, AND THE WORKING CONDITIONS IN ITS FACTORY ARE BEST EXEMPLIFIED BY ITS EXTREMELY LOW LABOR TURNOVER RATE.

3. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT OPIC INSURANCE FOR THESE THREE COMPANIES BE APPROVED SOONEST.
JONES

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Message Attributes

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